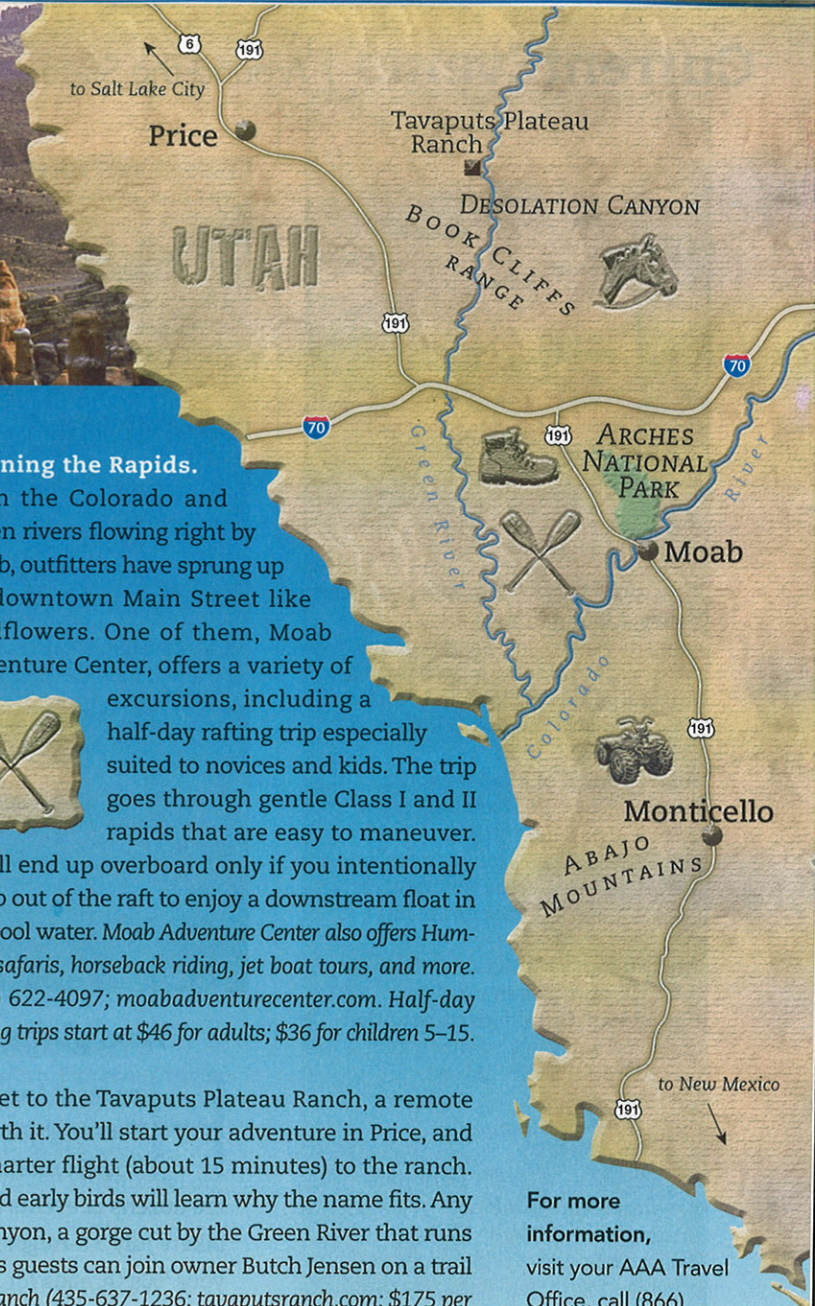
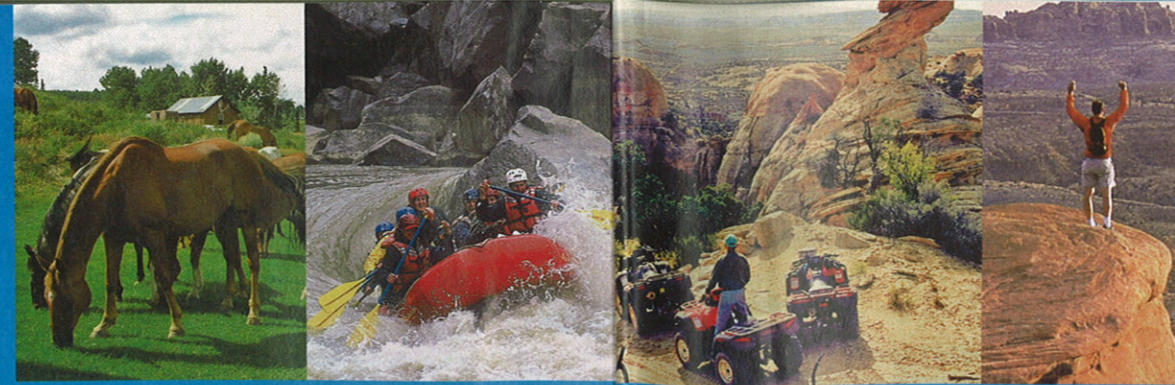


Riding an ATV, hiking, rafting, and overnighting at a ranch. Each activity offers a visceral way to experience Southeast Utah's stunning beauty. Best of all, you can squeeze all of this into a week's vacation, collecting adventures like souvenirs. Try this sampler of excursions on a drive trip from Monticello to Price. Or, if time is tight, simply park yourself in any one these towns and you'll still have plenty of active pursuits to choose from.



Monticello *Riding High.* Take a guided ATV trip into Utah's backcountry, where rocky hills give way to forest and white aspens flank primitive trails. The sun peeking through the leaves creates such eerie shadows that you half expect a sprite to buzz by like in a sci-fi fantasy film. Riders head high into the Abajo Mountains (elevation at the peak: 11,360 feet), where the air is cool, for an unobstructed view of the entire Four Corners region, including the Shiprock formation in northwestern New Mexico. Alert riders might even spot a buck or other wildlife in the thick brush. Black Hawk Tours' fleet of ATVs takes groups on single-day or multiday trips. Theme trips can focus on Anasazi ruins, photography, and the San Juan Mission Trail. (800) 308-3460. Call for prices.

Rocks of Ages: Three Gossips rock formation in Arches National Park

Moab *Walks to Remember.* Start your visit to Arches National Park at the visitors center, which tells the story behind the park's more than 2,000 natural sandstone arches, windows, spires, and other odd-shaped landforms. They're the result of years of salt movement, erosion, and other geologic events—and the formations are still evolving. Last summer, the famous Wall Arch—first discovered in 1948—collapsed. You can get up close to these natural sculptures from the park's numerous hiking trails, many of them rated easy to moderate. Motorists can take a 48-mile self-guided tour that accesses the major sites. Arches National Park, (435) 719-2299; nps.gov/arch. Admission: \$10 per vehicle for a seven-day pass; \$5 for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists.

Running the Rapids. With the Colorado and Green rivers flowing right by Moab, outfitters have sprung up on downtown Main Street like wildflowers. One of them, Moab Adventure Center, offers a variety of excursions, including a half-day rafting trip especially suited to novices and kids. The trip goes through gentle Class I and II rapids that are easy to maneuver. You'll end up overboard only if you intentionally jump out of the raft to enjoy a downstream float in the cool water. Moab Adventure Center also offers Hummer safaris, horseback riding, jet boat tours, and more. (888) 622-4097; moabadventurecenter.com. Half-day rafting trips start at \$46 for adults; \$36 for children 5–15.

Price *Mountain Ranch.* It takes some effort to get to the Tavaputs Plateau Ranch, a remote retreat in the Book Cliffs range, but it's worth it. You'll start your adventure in Price, and either drive (about two hours) or take a charter flight (about 15 minutes) to the ranch. Tavaputs is a Ute Indian word for sunrise, and early birds will learn why the name fits. Any time, you can enjoy views of Desolation Canyon, a gorge cut by the Green River that runs deeper than the Grand Canyon. Adventurous guests can join owner Butch Jensen on a trail ride through the property's 15,000 acres. Tavaputs Plateau Ranch (435-637-1236; tavaputsranch.com; \$175 per person per day, including meals) is open June–October; book as early as September 15 of the previous year. Red Tail Aviation (435-637-9556; redtailaviation.com; see website for fares) runs charter flights from Price and Moab. ✪

To find additional adventures, go to utah.travel or call (800) 200-1160.

KENDRA STREY is features editor of New Mexico Journey.

For more information, visit your AAA Travel Office, call (866) 567-9217, or go to AAA.com/travel. The AAA Indian Country Guide Map is available at your local AAA office.

Adventures To Go

Plot an action-packed vacation in Southeast Utah

BY KENDRA STREY

KAREN EAKINS; INSETS FROM LEFT, KENDRA STREY, MOAB ADVENTURE CENTER; COURTESY SAN JUAN COUNTY EDYS; MAC, MAP BY STEPHEN SCHILLING



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